

DOC requests information from crime victims



The Department of Corrections has mailed letters to many Montana crime victims asking for information that will ensure that any restitution payments they are receiving or may receive in the future are made in a timely and accurate manner.

If you received a letter, you are listed as a victim in a felony case where restitution was ordered at some time in the past.

In September 2011 and in compliance with a U.S. Internal Revenue Service requirement, the state of Montana began the process of creating a single file containing all the names and identifying information for all individuals and companies doing business with the state. This includes anyone who receives payments from the state.

As a result of the project, all state agencies are required to obtain a valid taxpayer identification number (TIN) from businesses and Social Security numbers (SSN) from individuals who may be in a position to receive a state payment. As of July 1, 2012, these identifying numbers are required before checks can be issued to an individual or business. This mandate applies to individuals receiving crime victim restitution payments through the Department of Corrections.

In an effort to prevent any interruption in restitution payments, the department mailed notifications about this requirement to the most recent known addresses of victims identified in our restitution collections unit. Many of those receiving the notices were victims of crimes from many years ago that include such offenses as bad-check writing.

The notices were sent to individuals and businesses regardless of whether they are receiving restitution payments at the current time.

A service to victims, the letter requests recipients complete a W-9 form and return it to the department to avoid any potential delays in distribution of current or future restitution payments.

Some important points to remember:

- Victim payments are **NOT** taxable.
- Offenders **DO NOT** have access to victim information located within the department's collection system.
- The identification numbers provided remain **confidential**.
- Having a consolidated file ensures that all agencies are using the same ID number for all payments, allowing court judgments, past tax debts and child support payments to be deducted as required by law.
- Victims may also sign up for direct deposit of restitution payments. This service will be effective July 1.
- Individuals needing additional information may contact the department's Collections Unit at CorRestitutionCheckgroup@mt.gov or the following numbers: **406-444-6872**

800-801-3478